

## **The beauty of the unchangeable creator is to be inferred from the beauty of the changeable creation**

"Question the beauty of the earth, question the beauty of the sea, question the beauty of the air, amply spread around everywhere, question the beauty of the sky, question the serried ranks of the stars, question the sun making the day glorious with its bright beams, question the moon tempering the darkness of the following night with its shining rays, question the animals that move in the waters, that amble about on dry land, that fly in the air; their souls hidden, their bodies evident; the visible bodies needing to be controlled, the invisible souls controlling them; question all these things. They all answer you, 'Here we are, look; we're beautiful.'

Their beauty is their confession. Who made these beautiful changeable things, if not one who is beautiful and unchangeable? Finally in man himself, in order to be able to understand and know God, the creator of the universe; in man himself, I repeat, they questioned these two elements, body and soul. They questioned the very thing they themselves carried around with them; they could see their bodies, they couldn't see their souls. But they could only see the body from the soul. I mean, they saw with their eyes, but inside there was someone looking out through these windows. Finally, when the occupant departs, the house lies still; when the controller departs, what was being controlled falls down; and because it falls down, it's called a cadaver, a corpse. Aren't the eyes complete in it? Even if they're open, they see nothing. There are ears there, but the hearer has moved on; the instrument of the tongue remains, but the musician who used to play it has withdrawn.

So they questioned these two things, the body which can be seen, the soul which cannot be seen, and they found that what cannot be seen is better than what can be seen; that the hidden soul is better, the evident flesh of less worth. They saw these two things, they observed them, carefully examined each one, and they found that each, in man himself, is changeable. The body is changeable by the processes of age, of decay, of nourishment, of health improving and deteriorating, of life, of death. They passed on to the soul, which they certainly grasped as being better, and also admired as invisible. And they found that it too is changeable; now willing, now not willing; now knowing, now not knowing; now remembering, now forgetting; now frightened, now brave; now advancing toward wisdom, now falling back into folly. They saw that it too is changeable. They passed on beyond even the soul; they were looking, you see, for something unchangeable. So in this way they arrived at a knowledge of the god who made things, through the things which he made."

St. Augustine, Sermons, 241, Easter: c.411 A.D.

Prayer:

O God, You are never far from those who sincerely search for You. Accompany those who err and wander far from You. Turn their hearts towards what is right and let them see the signs of Your Presence in the beauty of created things. We ask this.....

By Ateneo Pontificio "Regina Apostolorum"

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